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NEWS AND TRENDS . . .

IN CITY DEVELOPMENT

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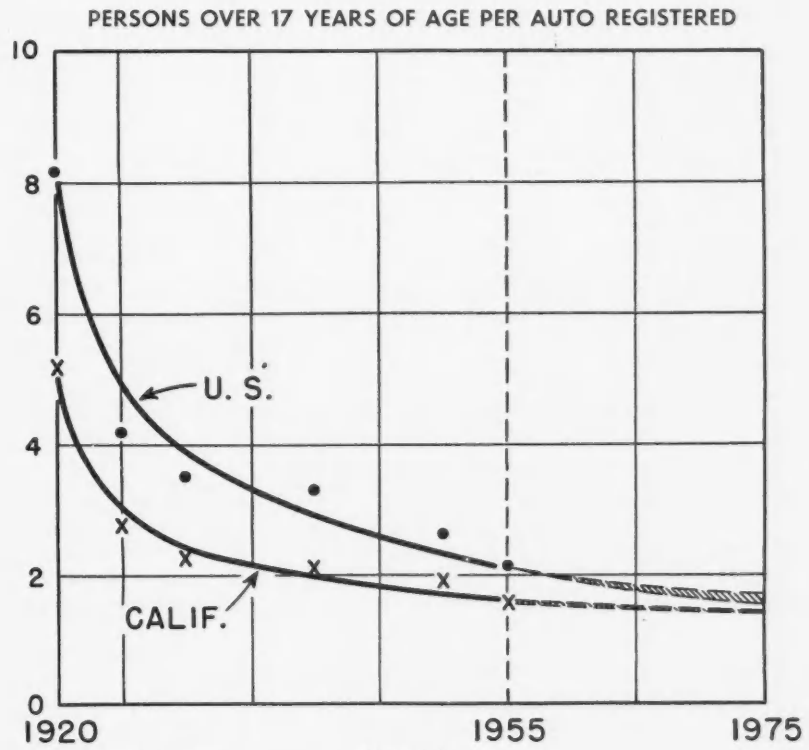
URBAN AREAS OF THE FUTURE

Their Nature and Traffic Needs

By
Robinson Newcomb
Economic Consultant



Robinson Newcomb Assoc. FIGURE 1

Editor's Note

The impact of the automobile on our urban areas is too well known to require debate. However, it is usually discussed in the limited terms of traffic and parking without relating it fully to the urban economy and how provisions for it may affect or be affected by the growth patterns of any given area.

Dr. Robinson Newcomb takes a fresh and intriguing view of this subject in the following article which was developed from an address recently given before the Institute of Traffic Engineers. He is in a unique position to do so, having served as economic advisor to more than half a dozen Federal agencies since 1928, including the Department of Commerce, Federal Works Agency, Defense Mobilization and President's Council of Economic Advisers. He has authored a number of treatises in the fields of construction and real property economics and is a contributor to various technical and trade journals. Since 1953 he has maintained his own consulting organization in Washington.

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Plan-itorial . . .

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In a recent address to the New England Regional Council, Mr. C. L. W. Swanson, Chief Soil Scientist of the Connecticut Experiment Station, New Haven, made some succinct remarks regarding the rapid expansion of urban areas, which should receive our thoughtful attention. After commenting on New England's agricultural situation in terms of plentiful water, low evaporation, soil quality and modern farming techniques, Mr. Swanson observes:

"You may say the cities are using up our land. They are. Good agricultural land is being used for industrial and home sites. Land adjacent just as good for either use is oftentimes left idle. Just because our good agricultural land is being gobbled up by industry and by homeowners is no reason to say that it should continue. If our pioneers had had that line of thinking the West would never have been settled.

"According to a study made by the Soil Conservation Service, 15,000 acres of land suitable for cultivation is converted to non-agricultural uses in New England each year. This is over 23 square miles a year. This figure does not represent the total conversion, but only the land considered suitable for cultivation.

"Why should we be concerned about this? As cultivatable land shifts to other uses, and as food demands increase, food production shifts more and more to the less desirable land for crop growing. This increases the cost of production and, hence, the cost of food. Increased food costs ultimately mean a lower standard of living with less money left to buy so-called luxuries produced by industry. In our country, food takes about one-fourth of our spendable income. In many foreign countries, food takes 30 to 80 percent and more of their spendable income.

"In taking the long-time look, it is obvious we need to do something about urban sprawl. Just as something was done about erosion control after a long period of inactivity, something needs to be done about the disappearance of our agricultural land.

"We need urban leaders who can see that land should be used according to its capabilities. Our idea of capabilities should be expanded to include not only agricultural but industrial and other uses.

"Other things being equal, agricultural land probably should be given priority over other uses. Buildings can be put most anywhere but once land is ruined by buildings, for practical purposes it is ruined forever for agriculture."

We think Mr. Swanson has a point, namely, the growing need for weighing the relative productivity of land in combined urban and agricultural terms rather than separately. We have slowly begun to do this for our number one need, drinking water supplies. It's not too early to do the same with our number two need, food.

M.S.W.

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CBD—CENTRAL CITY
A Correction

In the September 1956 issue of URBAN LAND, on page 5, Dr. Homer Hoyt stated that retail sales increased 23 percent in central business districts from 1948 to 1954, and 59 percent outside the central business districts. Instead of "central business districts", these figures applied to the *"central cities" in standard metropolitan areas*, and to areas in standard metropolitan areas outside of the central cities.

A total of 19 bulletins on central business districts have been issued by the Bureau of the Census to date. In these 19 cities, retail sales in central business districts increased 2.7 percent from 1948 to 1954, while retail sales in areas outside of central business districts in 14 standard metropolitan areas for which comparable data could be secured, increased 84.7 percent.

This explanation of percentage gains in retail sales tends to strengthen the conclusion in Dr. Hoyt's article. The conclusion is—central business districts no longer hold the monopolistic position in the department store and apparel field which they once enjoyed.

URBAN AREAS OF THE FUTURE

Their Nature and Traffic Needs

By
Robinson Newcomb
Economic Consultant

It is sometimes argued, and seriously, that there is no use in trying to provide traffic facilities adequate for the private automobile because the demand for user-owner transportation can be adequately handled. This analysis attempts to explore a few ways of estimating what traffic might be were facilities adequate. The results suggest that if facilities are well-planned and located, it may be possible to provide facilities which people would like to use, and provide them so they could be used without frustrating congestion. The demands for traffic facilities are huge, but not insatiable. If we continue to provide facilities for only 40, 50, or 60 per cent of the potential traffic, our capacities will remain crowded, but that does not mean that they will still be crowded if we added the additional 40, 50, or 60 per cent capacity, as the case may be. Anyone attempting to empty a tub with a sieve, or even a very leaky bucket, may think the supply of water he is trying to dispose of is unlimited, but if he uses a good pump or a whole bucket he may find the task surprisingly easy.

New York City: A Missed Opportunity

Before discussing the traffic needs of the cities of 1975 or 1985, I would like to refer to some recent history. Some 30 years ago a group of enlightened citizens in New York financed an elaborate study of the prospects and problems of the New York City of 1965. They felt, and rightly, that the problems of 1925 and 1930 could be handled better if the developments to which the city would have to adjust to survive effectively were known in broad outline in advance.

The experts hired by these citizens thought New York would grow over 75 per cent in the 30 years to 1955, and would more than double in the 40 years to 1965. The nonfarm population of the United States as a whole grew about 65 per cent by 1955 and is expected to more than double by 1965. So New York was expected to grow somewhat more rapidly than the nonfarm population of the United States has grown. And the experts expected the automobile registration in the metropolitan area of 1955 to be eight times what it was in 1925.

Instead of growing 75 per cent by 1955, New York grew 30 per cent, though the nonfarm population of the United States did increase 65 per cent. And of course there was nothing like the 8 million automobiles forecast for the region in 1955. At first glance, therefore, these projections for New York may seem to have been foolish, or at least in considerable error.

But a second look at the history of New York makes one wonder if the technicians who worked on the prospects for the city 30 years ago may not have been right. The failure of the forecast may have been due in considerable part to the failure of the city to follow the suggestions of the economists and engineers who drafted the reports.

There were about as many automobiles per capita in metropolitan New York City in 1925 as there were in the United States as a whole. There may have been more per capita in 1930 than there were in the United States (which suggests that automobile ownership in metropolitan New York was growing faster during the 20's than it was in the United States). And there were about 60 per cent more cars per capita in New York City than there were in New York State as a whole in 1930. As a matter of fact, in 1930 metropolitan New York City appears to have had about 90 per cent as many cars per capita as did California. New York traffic was growing rapidly.

Then the depression came, and New York failed to build the transportation facilities the experts had warned were needed.

California—A Contrast

By 1940, California had far outdistanced New York, and today of course there is no comparison between the number of automobiles per capita in metropolitan New York and in the State of California, though the population is about the same today for the two regions. I wonder what the story of New York City might have been had the transportation facilities been made available in the time that the technicians advised. Highways were built in California, in both the major cities and in the State as a whole. Few claim enough were built, yet far more were built than in New York City. Consequently, traffic flows more freely in California cities than in New York City. And note how the growth of California cities compares with that of New York City.

I do not mean to imply that highway facilities are the only factor that enabled the California cities to continue to grow while New York's growth flattened out. Nor do I mean to imply that solely as a result of the provision of highways, California cities were able to buy and use automobiles at a far greater rate than the citizens of New York City. But it would appear obvious that the unwillingness of the citizens of New York to design, finance, and build adequate highways is one of the reasons for the congestion which helps make life less pleasant in metropolitan New York. It also helps to make business more expensive.

The building of good roads outside the New York City area is now encouraging business in Connecticut, New Jersey, upstate New York and other areas outside the city. Business is still willing to locate in the general area of New York if it can get adequate facilities. But the failure to heed the suggestions of the planning technicians made some 30 years ago has cost the New York City region dear during the last 25 years.

It must be recognized of course that New York City had greater physical handicaps to overcome in order to build good facilities than did most of California. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the needed work was not performed, with the results we all know. Other urban areas are now beginning to see the congestion that New York had reached 30 years ago. This suggests that a long look into the future may help facilitate the healthy growth of metropolitan areas throughout the United States. If we do not take such a long look and follow through, many communities may find themselves repeating the experience of New York City.

The Long Look

Possibly the first part of the long look at the traffic problem of the future which should be taken requires—as it did for New York City 30 years ago—that we get an idea of the magnitude

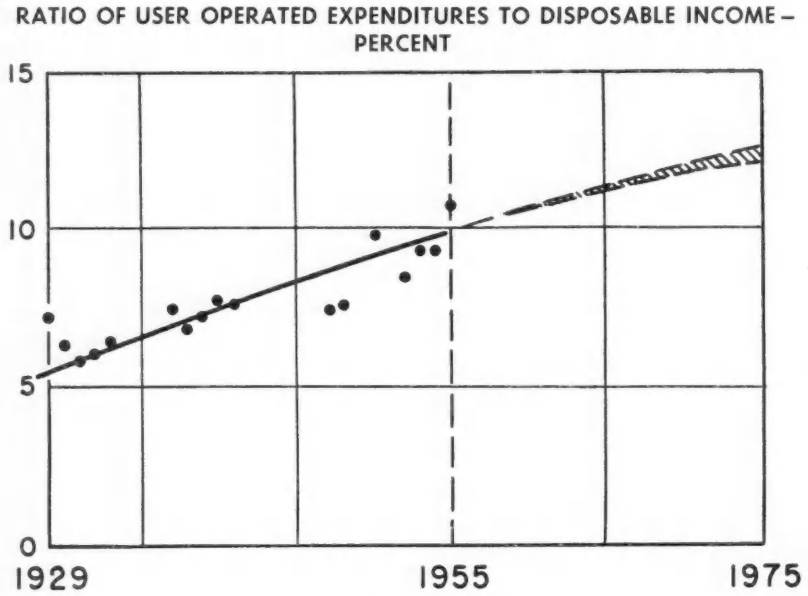

FIGURE 2

of our problem. What will be the nonfarm population in 1975? For how many automobiles will it be necessary to provide service, highway space, and space for parking? For how great an increase in nonfarm traffic should we plan? What will truck traffic look like, etc.? What nonfarm population will we have to service? I am using the concept of nonfarm rather than urban population deliberately.

The urban is continuing to merge into the rural nonfarm. The line between the two areas is becoming more difficult to demarcate. The living standards of the nonfarm worker in rural areas may be as high or higher than those of the nonfarm worker in the urban area. The transportation facilities required by the rural nonfarm worker may be greater than those required by the urban worker. The rural nonfarm worker almost always has his job in an urban area. Whether the worker begins his trek to his job in the urban area or not, he moves into or in the urban area. So, in computing traffic facility needs for urban areas of the future, we must allow for the movement of the rural nonfarm as well as the urban population itself.

In projecting nonfarm population of the future, I used the high population projection of the Census Bureau. Some consider these projections too low for certain purposes, but they appear satisfactory for this purpose. Assuming no further decline in the farm population, these projections of the Census suggest that the nonfarm population will increase over 3 million a year, or 60 million in 20 years; and that the number of nonfarm households will increase 850,000 to 900,000 a year. If this added population is housed with a density of 2,000 people per square mile, it would require the building up of nonfarm residential areas at the rate of 1,500 square miles per year. This may mean an increase, roughly, in our nonfarm residential areas of about 3 percent of the current area per year, as compared with a 2 percent increase per year in the current population size. In 20 years it may mean an increase in the built-up residential areas of the country of about 65 percent, or about a million acres a year.

More Urban Land Needed

This would need about 500 square miles of land dedicated for roads and streets each year. Of this figure, about 375 square miles would be local streets. At an average width of 65 feet, this would require the building of 30,000 miles of local streets per year. About 125 square miles would be needed for other roads. If we use an arbitrary figure of 25 feet of right-of-way per lane, it will be necessary to build 25,000 miles of traffic lanes per year to carry the automobiles and trucks from the subdivisions to work, shopping centers, or other destinations. If the average number of lanes is 4, this annual growth would need over 6,000 miles of such roads.

A higher than 2,000 persons per square mile density would of course require less land and fewer roads, but the density of the areas being added by 1975 may prove to be lower rather than higher than 2,000 per square mile. There will be probably also additional demand for land and highway facilities to service the people leaving the more heavily built-up sections of some existing cities. The 1,500 square mile per year figure may be on the low side.

More Cars Coming

Next, how many cars must we service? Our expanding road and street systems may have to carry twice as many automobiles by 1975 as they are carrying today. This conclusion can be reached by several methods. One of the simplest is to compare the automobile population of the United States as a whole with that of California. (See Figure 1). The number of cars per person over seventeen years of age has tended to be considerably greater in California than in the United States as a whole. I suspect that the United States ratio now lags behind that of California by about ten years. The illustration shows the number of cars per person over seventeen years of age for the United States and for California, from 1920 through 1955, with a projection through 1975. This projection implies that there will be no more cars per capita in the United States as a whole by 1975 than there were in California in 1955. Assuming that adequate roads are built by 1975 so that the United States then will be supplied better than California is today, this chart suggests that the national ratio in 1975 may approximate that of California for 1955. If this happens, there will be over 90 million cars registered in 1975. If the ratio drops to 1.5 rather than the 1.6 suggested, as a result in part of an adequate supply of highway and other transportation facilities, there will be over 95 million cars registered.

Another method of approaching this problem uses the relationship of cars per spending unit by income groups. Using projections of income prepared by the Government, and assuming only a slight tendency towards more two-car families as highway facilities improve, as distance to and from work increases, and as the tendency to part-time work grows, we get a projection of something over 100 million automobiles registered by 1975.

These projections suggest an increase of about 100 percent in the number of automobiles registered in the next 20 years.

The volume of traffic may be expected roughly to double also. There are several ways of projecting traffic estimates. One of the simplest is to project the relationship between expenditures for user-owned transportation and disposable income. Assuming the production of goods and services increases no faster in the future than it has in the past, disposable income in 1975, in constant dollars, will be nearly double what it was in 1955.

Figure 2 suggests the story. Expenditures for user-owned transportation have been rising per dollar of income. This expenditure is almost entirely for automobiles. We have assumed for this projection that the rise flattens out and does not exceed 12.1 percent in 1975. This suggested rate for 1975 is over 15 percent, lower than it was for some areas in 1955.

It may be noted that in many metropolitan areas, 12 to 14 percent of consumer expenditures were for user-owned automobile transportation, at least as far back as in 1950. In Los Angeles, the figure was reported as 14.8 percent; in Portland, Oregon, it is reported to have reached 15 percent. The figures were lower in cities that relied heavily on mass transportation, such as Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York—but the average for the entire population—urban and rural—was 10.5 percent in 1950, and the ratio rose to 11.5 in 1955. This projection therefore suggests a rise of about 5 percent in the ratio in the next 20 years.

Multiplying this ratio by the expected disposable income for 1975, we get an expenditure for privately owned automobiles in that year which will be more than double the 1955 expenditure, in constant dollars.

Historically, there has been a fairly close relationship between these expenditures, on a constant dollar basis and vehicle-mile travel; that is, the cost of travel has risen about as much as has the general cost of living. This may well be true in the future because improved highways should decrease costs per mile due to delays, accidents, insurance, wear-and-tear on the car resulting from bumpy or dangerous roads, and other factors. This will help offset any increases in the price of cars, fuel, or services, or increases in cost per mile due to greater speeds, should such increases exceed the average increase, if any, in the cost of living.

Another method of projecting traffic uses the relationship of vehicle-miles to the gross national product. Assuming the ratio of traffic to volume of business done grows relatively slowly from now on and flattens out around 1975 as adequate roads are provided, we would get about 185 to 215 miles of traffic per $100 of business done by that time. (See Figure 3).

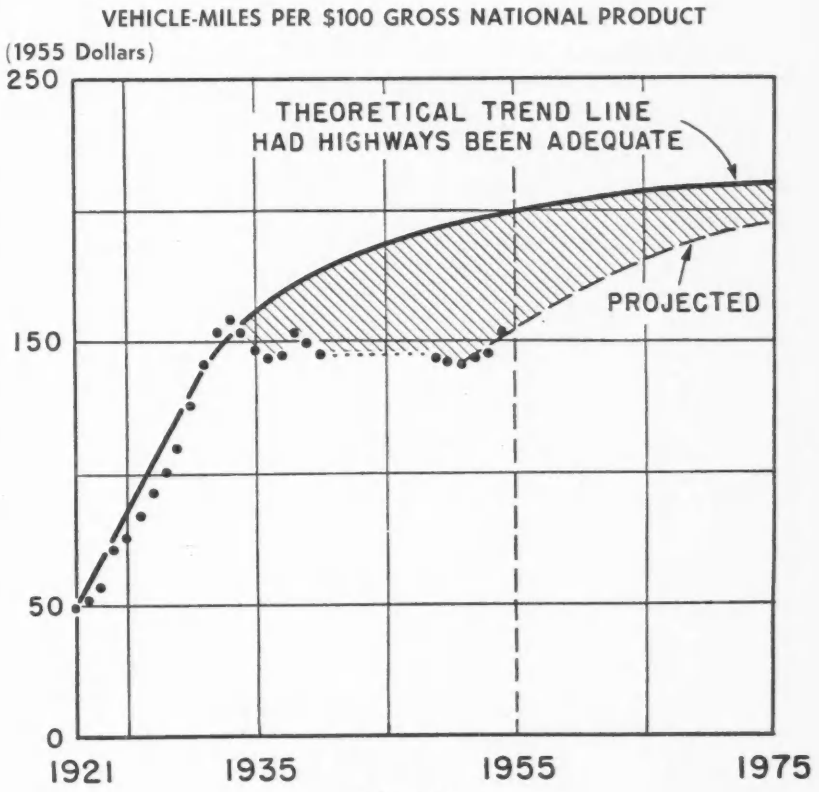

FIGURE 3

Further computations suggest by 1975 a volume of traffic at least double the 1955 level.

Truck traffic may grow at a similar rate. There is not space to describe the methods by which an analysis of truck traffic is made. It is necessary to work this problem out in detail as the use of roads varies greatly for oil, coal, iron and steel products, timber, and light consumer goods, for instance. But the analysis when completed suggests a truck traffic in 1975 of between 180 and 210 percent of the figures for 1955, or roughly a figure double that of last year.

These projections suggest an increase in the next 20 years of about two-thirds in the land devoted to residential use, a doubling of traffic and of automobile registrations, and an increase of 45 percent or more in the nonfarm population and in the number of nonfarm households. These projections are based on the assumption that, in general, prosperity will continue for at least the next 20 years.

Whither Our Economy?

From time to time, serious students ask whether it is reasonable to assume that the economy will continue to prosper in the future as well as it has on the average, including the 30's, in the past. They point out correctly that if our economy should falter, requirements of the sort we have been examining will decrease, that traffic will not grow as forecast in the United States just as it did not grow as forecast in New York City. It may not be a probability, but it is a possibility that should be examined.

If facilities are not provided which would make it possible for the economy to grow, the economy of course will not grow. But traffic continued to increase in the United States during 1930 and 1931 even though business as a whole declined and we were heading into a depression. The volume of traffic continued to grow until the very severe year of 1932, and it continued to grow in relation to the volume of business done even through 1933. It grew from 1934-1940. Traffic really ceased grow-

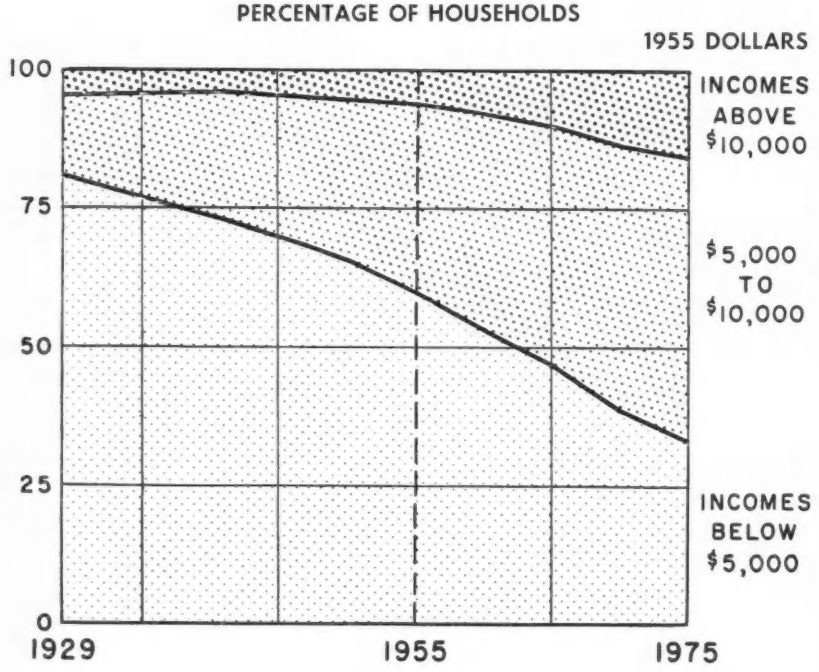

FIGURE 4

ing relative to the economy only when the volume of road building dropped to inadequate levels, as it did in 1933.

It is quite possible therefore that we could have a recession but that if traffic facilities were adequate, traffic would continue to grow as it did in 1930 and 1931, and that traffic per dollar of business done would continue to grow as it did even in 1933. This in itself might help to cushion any recession.

There are, moreover, good reasons for believing that any recession in the future will be very much milder than that of the 30's. This is not the place to go into a technical discussion about recessions and we can only touch on the reasons for this belief. Our intelligence as to developments in economic and business areas which might herald trouble—such as developments in inventory, credit, business investment, or savings—is far better than it was in 1929. Our knowledge of the techniques for controlling credit is far better than we possessed in 1929. The capacity of the Federal Government to support an economy, through its business expenditures of $45 to $50 billion a year, did not exist in 1929. Support for agriculture, and social security, old-age payments, and other resources are available now to give a large measure of insurance against severe depressions.

The prospects are hopeful that we shall not again have major depressions, though we shall probably have minor ones.

Long-run trends, as distinguished from short-run cyclical prospects, also are very encouraging. The industrial revolution of course came early in manufacturing, then it began to spread to transportation, and later moved to distribution and to agriculture. It is now being felt in the clerical and office fields. While productivity is continuing to rise in manufacturing, it is rising even faster in agriculture and in some forms of distribution. Soon it will be rising faster in many of the office operations. It has not reached the end of the road by any means nor will it have reached the end 20 years from now. Potentials for increased productivity seem as great or greater today than they did 50 years ago. The rate of improvement which has existed for the last 150 years or more may therefore continue to be with us for the next 20 years.

Finally, we might well ask those who question our ability to continue to progress whether they believe their children and ours are more stupid or lazier than we or our parents. The coming generation should be at least as well equipped to handle the problems they will face than we or our fathers. So there is reason to believe that the rate of progress of the past will, on the average, continue in the foreseeable future. This could mean a total volume of business—or in the economists' language, a gross national product—for 1980 or 1985 of about one trillion 1955 dollars.

Rising Income

If per capita incomes rise roughly 1¾ percent per year, and incomes rise at least as fast relatively in the lower-income groups as in the upper, the proportion of families in what is today considered as low-income groups obviously must decrease. This will have an important effect on the cities of the future, and on the transportation of the future. Figure 4 gives some projections of the income distribution that may be expected in the future. In 1955 about 60 percent of our 50 million households had incomes of less than $5,000; about 40 percent had incomes above $5,000, and the average income after taxes was about $5,100.

By 1975, over 60 percent of the expected 65 million households may have incomes above $5,000 in contrast with the 60 percent with incomes below that figure in 1955. The percent with incomes from $5,000 to $7,500 may increase by one-third; the percent with incomes from $7,500 to $10,000 may about double, and the percentage of those with incomes over $10,000 may somewhat more than double. The average income may be appreciably over $7,000. If this turns out to be true, it should mean that new housing being built may have average values in 1965 of around $16,000 to $17,000, and in 1975, of not far from $20,000.

A study of this chart will do more to suggest what cities of 1965 and 1975 will be like than any detailed descriptions of how shopping centers, or downtown centers, or subdivision layouts may look.

Central City and Suburbs

As the income of our people rises, they will demand and be able to pay for more comfortable and more convenient residential, shopping and transportation facilities. As developers and other business men learn this, they will provide better facilities of all types, which will attract families, merchants, and business men. Owners of existing properties, slum as well as non-slum, commercial as well as residential, will be faced with the task of improving their attractiveness or of losing business. In its extreme form, this could be in part a fight between the central city and the suburbs for consumers' shopping dollars and between the main city and the suburbs for con-

sumers' outlays for residential purposes.

Planners and engineers will not have to take a position for or against old or new areas. Nor should they have to, for each should complement the other. Only if the central city refuses to adapt to the higher standards of the future will it be necessary to build competitors for its trade. But planner and engineer should make sure that when they plan traffic facilities for new or old areas they allow for about 40 percent increase in per-capita traffic by 1975.

What to Look For

National averages of course cannot be used in any particular locality. The nonfarm labor force of the United States as a whole may grow something over 35 percent between 1955 and 1975, but in any individual community it may decline 10 percent or grow 5,000 percent. When public officials provide the assumptions as to the anticipated labor force by types for cities, it will be desirable to allow for an increase of possibly 20 to 40 percent in the number of automobile trips to and from work per worker by 1975.

This may occur for several reasons. First, there may be a greater increase in part-time than in full-time employment.

Second, there may be more dispersion of employment, and a higher proportion of smaller plants. This may encourage private as against mass transportation.

Third, there will be more two-car families. This will permit more diversity of employment within a given family, and therefore more automobile trips per job, and in general two-car ownership seems to increase rather decrease per-capita driving.

As the number of hours per work week may be shorter in 1965 than in 1955, and as the number of cars per adult may be 30 to 40 percent higher in 1975, allowance should be made for a sizable increase in the number of trips per capita for shopping and local recreational purposes, too. This increase may average 30 to 40 percent per capita. Of course this may not occur. Development in preserving food, in shopping via television, and developments which may simplify delivery practice, could reduce the number of trips per family for shopping. On the other hand, increased incomes and car ownership, increased standards of living, increased diversity of goods offered for sale, and even increased competition for the consumer dollar may mean more shopping trips.

In planning for more trips per person, allowance should be made also for more parking space for each trip terminus, including more parking space per job. Parking requirements should allow for two cars for every house costing $15,000 or more; they should provide for adequate parking space for department stores as well as shopping centers; and they should provide for an amount of parking space that varies with the availability of rapid transit.

Public Transit

Planners and traffic engineers cannot escape responsibility for influencing the position of mass transit in the cities of the future. Mass transportation which, all agree, is more efficient in its use of land both for movement and for parking than is the automobile, has been losing its customers. It has lost customers because it has provided poor service in an inconvenient manner rather than because it has charged too much.

One of the reasons it has provided poor service is the fact that streets have not been designed or controlled so as to permit both heavy automobile and fast local mass transit service. The customer should be able to choose between private and public transportation. If streets were designed or their use controlled so as to permit fast bus or streetcar service, and if the transportation company would then provide fast, direct, comfortable, and, if posible, frequent service, the trend towards the use of private automobiles for trips to work and to stores might be checked or reversed.

To the extent that riders can and will voluntarily shift to rapid mass transit, street and parking areas can be reduced, to the advantage of all concerned.

If all new residential, industrial, commercial, and public facilities have adequate parking and transportation facilities, this will force owners of existing facilities to re-examine their attitude towards parking and towards the use of roads and streets. To the extent that downtown areas are willing to meet the cost over and above that which would be repaid through ordinary user charges, the face-lifting of downtown areas can be encouraged through better transportation facilities, among other things, so that these older areas can complement the newer areas most effectively.

This suggests the maintenance of a well-balanced arrangement between old and new areas rather than the attempt to control the detailed design of the new cities. The Russian system of designing and planning urban growth from above and in detail has many advantages, but I suspect our system which permits overall planning and zoning, and fairly detailed requirements for utilities, including streets and sewers, and water layouts, will permit cities to grow in a more efficient fashion in the long run. Thus, urban areas, while in a continual state of change, can in large part evolve towards higher standards as a result of freer traffic flow—something New York City was unable to do.

If we acquire adequate, well-located rights-of-way for major traffic arteries far in advance, our cities can grow in healthy fashion around these rights-of-way, and the blight which now exists in so much of our urban areas will decrease under the whip of the example of the new areas. The cities of the future, therefore, can be far more pleasant than the cities we now know.

ST. LOUIS METROPOLITAN AREA

A study designed to find some answers to the metropolitan problem is being undertaken in St. Louis and St. Louis County by Washington and St. Louis Universities under grants totaling $300,000 from the Ford Foundation and McDonnell Aircraft Corporation Trust. In addition to pointing out possible solutions to the metropolitan problem in St. Louis, the study is expected to provide guidance and direction for other areas. The study is scheduled to be completed in the Fall of 1957.

INDUSTRIAL PLAN ANALYSIS

Six specific proposals for the provision of industrial sites through land development and redevelopment were reviewed by Urban Land Institute's Industrial Council at a meeting in St. Louis on November 9. Questions discussed included such topics as plot sizes, provision of non-industrial services, building restrictions, set-backs, multi-line rail service, problems of land assembly, and methods of marketing industrial land made avail through urban redevelopment.

This plan analysis service is available to any Sustaining Member of U.L.I. The next Industrial Council's plan analysis meeting has been tentatively sheduled for the Spring of 1957.

PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TOWARD DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE

We surmise that central business districts of cities have characteristics of strength and weakness. But without detailed investigations we seldom have little more than hearsay to support our conclusions. Downtown Providence is a district which now has the facts about its existing condition. A "modified probability" type of survey entitled "Attitudes and Practices of Residents of Greater Providence Concerning Downtown Providence" has just been completed by Robert W. Pratt for the Downtown Business Coordinating Council of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce.

This study gives the downtown community the direct evidence it needs for taking steps to strengthen its present position and to improve its future outlook. Without this knowledge, there were areas of disagreement and misinformation. Because some of the information uncovered by this central area study reveals trends which may be prevalent in other cities, excerpts from the findings of the Providence study are given to stir interest in similar case studies.

Outward Migration

"Better living" is the clue to the urge among city residents for moving to areas outside the city. Fifty-three percent of city residents have thought of moving out and only five percent of those living outside the city have entertained any thought of moving into the city. To put it another way, for every fourteen city residents who think there is a good chance for their moving out there is only one outside resident who thinks there is a good chance he will move in.

Nearly half of the suburban residents, and more than half of the country residents from this survey, say there are no advantages to living in the city. The most frequently named **advantages** of city living are given as proximity to stores, proximity to work or business, ease or cheapness of getting around, and proximity to schools. The most frequently named **disadvantages** of city living are listed as congestion, bad conditions for children, noise, dirt, smells, bad air, traffic, and lack of yards, or land, or room.

Downtown Providence

There is less dependence on downtown Providence than there formerly was. One quarter of the reasons given by respondents who go downtown less often now than formerly is that they can get what they want without going downtown, and an equal number of reasons is given indicating that there is no necessity to go downtown now.

To shop, is the most frequent reason given for going to downtown Providence. To work, or for business reasons, is next in importance. However, some secondary or less compelling reasons appear to be important factors in getting people downtown. Chief among these are theaters, entertainment, eating, and paying bills. The more frequently people go downtown, the greater the variety of things they do.

In the survey, the attitude of respondents toward the appearance of downtown Providence is not very enthusiastic. Twenty-one percent rate it as unattractive, fifty-eight percent as fairly attractive, and sixteen percent as very attractive. A few have no opinions. The ratings vary with respondents' backgrounds. Newer residents, persons who feel familiar with the downtown shopping areas of cities outside of Rhode Island, and persons in the upper rental value classification, are more likely to consider downtown Providence unattractive.

Thirty-two percent of persons employed in downtown Providence would like it better if their place of employment were more than a mile away from downtown, while only thirteen percent of those now employed at such a distance from downtown would like it better were their place of employment located downtown. Proximity of home to work, parking, traffic, and transportation problems appear to be the main conditioners of the attitudes of those who prefer the present location of their place of employment.

Transportation

The automobile is the preferred means of transportation to downtown Providence and there is public support for measures that would expedite the flow of traffic in and out of downtown, but not for measures that would restrict downtown parking.

Greatest use of buses to get to work is by persons employed in downtown Providence. Those who ride the bus to work report longer periods of time consumed than do those who go to work by other means.

The public is two to one against any sweeping prohibition of curb parking downtown. On the other hand, the idea of prohibiting parking on main streets going in and out of downtown Providence during rush hours is overwhelmingly endorsed and there is strong public support for channelization of bus traffic. The idea of assigning special lanes to buses where streets are wide enough is endorsed by a vote of more than 4 to 1, but the idea of setting aside special streets for buses is only supported by a vote of 4 to 3.

The indication is that the two to one margin of sentiment against prohibiting all parking downtown would be approximately reversed if there were more parking at the fringes of the downtown area.

The Summary

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that outward expansion of the population is going to continue in the foreseeable future and is more likely to accelerate than to decelerate. The result can only be more outlying shopping centers and a continuing lessening of dependence on dowtown Providence. Whether or not it has fully awakened to the fact, downtown Providence is no longer a monopoly. The only captive market it still holds is that which depends wholly on public transportation. This is continually decreasing in size. Whether it likes it or not, downtown Providence has become a competitor and the measure of its success in the future will be the degree to which it is successful as a competitor.

As a competitor, downtown Providence has certain large assets and liabilities. Its main assets are a central location and the relatively wide selection of goods and services that are offered in a relatively small area. These assets seem secure. Its main liabilities are the difficulties of ingress and egress and the parking problem. To these might be added its indifferent physical attractiveness.

With solutions to the problems of access and parking, it is possible that competition for customers will tend to bring about improvement in physical appearance and improve the attractiveness of downtown as a place to shop and to work. Meanwhile, however, the habits of the area's customer-prospects are changing. It does not seem wise to rely on completion of freeways and parking facilities if downtown is to realize its potential as a competitor. Downtown Providence should have a master plan, integrated with traffic and parking plans, for upgrading the physical attractiveness, efficiency, and appeal of the retail district in particular.